



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1002.0 - Australian Statistics Advisory Council - Annual Report, 2006-07

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Summary

About this Release

Outlines the functions and activities of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council.

Contents

CONTENTS

| |
|---|
| Mission |
| Letter to the Minister |
| Foreword |
| Chapter 1 - Introduction |
| Chapter 2 - Summary of Activities for 2006-07 |
| Chapter 3 - The Year Ahead - 2007-08 |
| Appendix 1 - Membership of Council and Attendance at Meetings |
| Appendix 2 - Agendas for ASAC Meetings |
| Appendix 3 - Australian Statistics Advisory Council - Annual Report |
| Appendix 4 - Operation of ASAC |
| Appendix 5 - Freedom of Information Statement |

Mission

[Contents >> Mission](#)

MISSION

To ensure that, in keeping with Council's statutory charter, the advice furnished to the Minister and the Statistician in relation to the collection and dissemination of statistics has due regard to relative priorities, is objective, relevant, timely, constructive and practical, and that it is sensitive to the needs of both suppliers and users of statistical data.



ASAC members meeting with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the Hon Chris Pearce, MP (seated 4th from left) on 5 June 2007.

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Letter to the Minister

[Contents >> Letter to the Minister](#)

LETTER TO THE MINISTER



AUSTRALIAN STATISTICS ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Telephone: (02) 6252 7809
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The Hon Chris Pearce, MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer

I have pleasure in submitting the Annual Report of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council for the year ended 30 June 2007.

The Annual Report outlines the work undertaken by the Council and is submitted to you for presentation to Parliament under sub-section 24(2) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

The Annual Report is dated on the day I approved the finalised text for printing.

Geoff Allen
Chairperson

17 August 2007

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Foreword

[Contents >> Foreword](#)

FOREWORD

This report marks my first as Chairperson of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (the Council). I have replaced Professor Sandra Harding, who retired from the position in February this year, and I would like to acknowledge and thank her for her contribution and leadership of the Council during the last five years.

The role of the Council is to provide guidance to the Minister and the Australian Statistician on the directions and priorities of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) work program.

Aspects of the proposed forward work program for the period 2007-08 to 2009-10, and resource estimates were considered by the Council at the November 2007 meeting. Following analysis of the advice received from the Council, the ABS then finalised the statistical work program for 2007-08 to 2009-10.

The largest statistical collection conducted by the ABS for 2006-07, the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, was launched on 24 July 2006 by the Treasurer, the Hon Peter Costello, MP. The Treasurer also launched the first release of the 2006 Census data on 27 June 2007. The Council,



which had received regular updates on the progress of the 2006 Census, were appreciative of the support provided by the Treasurer to this very important collection conducted by the ABS.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the Hon Chris Pearce, MP, addressed the Council at its June 2007 meeting and joined in the discussion on a range of issues. The Parliamentary Secretary advised the Council that he was impressed by the leadership shown by the ABS, and the quality of its work. He expressed a keen interest in the work of the Council, and felt that the Council could play an important role in talking through ideas and innovations, and assisting the ABS in putting forward new ideas to government. I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary for his support of the Council, and for the opportunity to meet with him and discuss statistical priorities.

The Council continues to have a full complement of members, and I acknowledge the valued contribution of all members. The work done by Council members to support the activities of the ABS, including membership of other ABS advisory groups, is also appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Adam Graycar for his contribution to the work of the Council as he resigned in June 2007 to take up a position overseas. I would also like to welcome his replacement, Mr Ben Wilson.

I am looking forward to working with the new Australian Statistician, Mr Brian Pink, who joined the Council in March 2007, during the remainder of my tenure as chair of the Council. I would also like to convey my appreciation to Mr Pink and his team for their positive approach to working with the Council, and to the advice we have provided during the year. Thanks also go to the ASAC Secretariat, without whose support the Council could not function in an effective manner.

I look forward to working with the Council, the ABS and the Minister, to continue the provision of an effective and responsive national statistical service.

This report will be available on the Council web site (www.asac.gov.au) which also contains information about the Council, including its functions and membership, together with meeting agendas.

Geoff Allen
Chairperson

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Chapter 1 - Introduction

[Contents >> Chapter 1 - Introduction](#)

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council was established by the **Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975**.

Under subsection 18(1) of the **Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975**, the Council is to advise the Minister and the Australian Statistician on:

(a) the improvement, extension and co-ordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia;

(b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services; and

(c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.

The Act enables the Minister or the Australian Statistician to seek the advice of Council on these

matters. The Council also offers advice to the Minister or the Australian Statistician when it considers it appropriate to do so.

The Act provides that the Council shall consist of a part-time Chair, the Australian Statistician (ex officio), and between ten and twenty two part-time members, including one nominee from each State Premier or Chief Minister Department. The Chair and members are appointed by the responsible Minister for periods of five years and up to three years respectively, and are eligible for reappointment. The membership of the Council as at 30 June 2007 is detailed at Appendix 1.

Subsection 24(2) of the Act provides that: **the Council shall, as soon as practicable after 30 June in each year, prepare and submit to the Minister, for presentation to the Parliament, a report relating to matters connected with the operation of this Act.**

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Chapter 2 - Summary of Activities for 2006-07

[Contents >> Chapter 2 - Summary of Activities for 2006-07](#)

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2006-07

The Council held two meetings during 2006–07:

- 28 November 2006, and
- 5 June 2007.

Detailed agendas for the meetings are provided at Appendix 2.

The Council considered a number of issues during 2006–07 including the following:

FORWARD WORK PROGRAM

The Council discussed the ABS' forward work program at both meetings in 2006-07.

At these meetings, the Australian Statistician indicated that there were increasing pressures on the ABS budget to continue the current work program. There were also many demands to expand the work program.

The Council recognised that for the ABS to continue to work within its budget it would require some reductions in its current work program. It therefore supported the ABS in seeking additional funding to enable it to take on new work, while maintaining its current statistical work program.

The Council considered the following areas where there was considered a need for an expansion in the work program:

- the household survey program, in particular, for surveys addressing population wellbeing
- environment statistics
- rural and regional statistics, and
- statistical leadership.

The Council supported the need to review the longer term program of household surveys to determine where the greatest gains could be made. It suggested that a stronger focus on administrative data or value-adding processes may, in some topic areas, deliver more benefits than conducting more surveys or increasing samples.

The Council recognised the environment statistics as an emerging area of high priority, where it suggested that the ABS has significant scope to demonstrate leadership across the wide spectrum of

data requirements – scientific, economic, and behavioural.

Rural and regional statistics were also identified as a priority, but members considered that the ABS needed to identify and target those areas which will deliver the greatest returns on investment.

NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE

The Council considered an update on recent developments of the National Statistical Service (NSS). It noted that the statistical leadership is developing both centrally and regionally, and the ABS needs to be more aware of regional efforts.

Council members strongly supported the development of a community of statisticians, and encouraged the ABS to include the private sector in the community. Council agreed that, as part of the development of the community of statisticians, there was a need to look at the synergies between producers and consumers of data. Council also suggested that the ABS needs to promote the NSS more widely in the community, and to clarify the difference between the ABS and the NSS.

The Council welcomed the move of the National Data Network from the current demonstration phase to a production network. Progress on the development of Information Development Plans (IDPs) was also discussed. The Council supported IDPs as they are considered to be important for identifying data gaps, but showed concern that resource issues were holding back the development of IDPs. The ABS advised the Council that although resource intensive, further action will continue to be undertaken on IDPs as resources become available.

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROGRAM REVIEW

The Council considered updates on the review at both meetings, as well as in its deliberations on the ABS Forward Work Program. The review, which is looking at the household survey program for the next 12 years, has two components: topic content, which addresses the high priority needs of users, and a survey model, which is looking at improving efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

The ABS advised the Council was that it was considering three scenarios in the review:

- a reduction in the current program, if there were to be no additional base funding to cover real world cost increases in obtaining responses from householders
- if that base funding is obtained, a fully funded program similar to that currently run, but with some modifications (less frequency for some collections and greater frequency for others, such as a families survey), or
- assuming substantial additional funding, a fully funded expanded program to fill major gaps identified.

There was a consensus by Council members that the first scenario would be a retrograde step, and while the second option was not as ideal as the third, members acknowledged the budget constraints currently facing the ABS.

The Council discussed the various options for undertaking household surveys, and explored some of the issues involved in household survey operations by the ABS.

The Council noted the consultative process currently being undertaken by the ABS, and looked forward to further updates on the review.

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS - STATISTICAL DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES

At the November 2006 meeting, the ABS advised the Council that it was reassessing the directions for Indigenous statistics to ensure they are in line with the current national, state and territory priorities, and is currently consulting with a range of stakeholders. The Council supported the consultation process and suggested the ABS consider using Indigenous medical services, and community organisations working with Indigenous people, as resources.

The Council's views were sought on the key strategic areas for Indigenous statistics, which were developed in consultation with the new ABS Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The key areas identified include:

- engagement with Indigenous communities, policy makers, researchers and other users of Indigenous statistics
- understanding and measuring Indigenous wellbeing
- early intervention and resilience
- Indigenous engagement in economic activity
- improved reporting and analysis of comparisons over time, and
- regional data: improved capacity to support regional and small area analysis.

The Council supported the key areas identified. A number of other areas, where additional data are required, were also identified including: Indigenous literacy, Indigenous economic activity data, and the impact of participation in sport on health outcomes for Indigenous people.

IMPROVING AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

The ABS informed the Council that the field of environment statistics is relatively new compared with economic and social domains, and that information needs, opportunities, gaps, standards and methodologies are all evolving. The ABS advised members that it is looking to build a program of dedicated data collection activities, drawn together into a comprehensive set of environmental accounts, to inform discussion and debate on issues such as water, land use, energy and emissions.

The Council urged the ABS to be assertive in its quest for additional funding for environmental work, noting a range of potential options. The Council also advised that the ABS must be able to market itself as the premier agency for environment statistics.

The ABS appreciated the Council's support and encouragement to improve Australia's system of environment statistics. The Council will continue to receive updates on the ABS environmental statistics strategy.

RURAL AND REGIONAL STATISTICS

Rural and regional statistics were identified as one of the priorities in the ABS Forward Work Program, and Council expressed a strong interest in the proposed program for rural and regional statistics. The Council noted that there is an increasing demand for information at the regional and small area level, for a variety of government and community uses, and the potential for administrative data to be used to meet users' needs. The Council agreed that the opportunity existed for the ABS to be an effective national statistical leader in the further development of rural and regional statistics, through the implementation of data sets, standards and presentation tools.

The ABS advised the Council that the most important part of the ABS' role will be in supporting other agencies to manage their data into a form that supports the effective use of these tools, and the integration of the data with other available statistics on a regional and small area basis.

The Council considered an overview of the breadth of the proposed program for rural and regional statistics, noting the different components covering statistical leadership, infrastructure (both statistical and information technology related), and data development and production. The ABS demonstrated a prototype presentation tool, which has been developed in line with the information technology infrastructure element of the rural and regional statistics program to allow users to discover, access, manipulate and display small area statistics at whatever geographic level they are interested.

The Council agreed that community expectations are the driver behind rural and regional statistics, and advised that the ABS needs to respond to this challenge. The main strategic issues for the ABS are that demand and supply of small area data is broadly based and, although a number of government departments also have small area data, they are usually coded to different geographical sites. The Council suggested that the ABS would need to show leadership in this area.

The Council strongly supported further development of rural and regional statistics, noting that small area statistics are increasingly important to a broad range of uses and users. The ABS indicated that considerable time and resources were needed to develop the prototype, and a critical aspect of the project was the implementation of mesh blocks to data holdings, as geographical boundaries are constantly changing. Once this is achieved, the necessary data development activities could then begin to create new regional level statistical series.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

The Council's views were sought on changes and developments in the field of agricultural statistics. The ABS informed members that coding to mesh blocks and an improved sampling frame was introduced for the 2005–06 Agricultural Census, which will create many opportunities, including the potential to integrate social data collected in the population census.

The ABS advised the Council that the Agriculture Information Development Plan had identified a wide range of unmet data needs, and that these issues would be progressed as resources permit. The Council supported the forward work plan for agriculture, and identified the need to collect additional information on social issues for the agricultural sector, such as responses to drought and other disasters, to assist in informing social policy. The Council requested that water availability and the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector be considered for future collections.

Council supported the approach outlined by the ABS to produce geographical output, and emphasised the importance of maintaining time series for statistical divisions. The ABS advised that it will provide data to 'bridge' between the 2005–06 Agricultural Census and previous series for main commodities, in an attempt to maintain a consistent time series. It also advised that data from the collection will also be coded to mesh blocks allowing results to be available in a range of regional structures.

ENHANCING SMALL AREA DATA IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The ABS advised the Council of the activities being undertaken to facilitate the release of a large range of both ABS and non ABS data on a set of common geographic boundaries.

The first step had been the development of mesh blocks, and the Council was advised that this is proceeding well.

The Council acknowledged the ABS' leadership in this area, and the importance of this leadership in assisting jurisdictions to make the most of the mesh block structure. A six monthly review of mesh blocks was suggested by members, and identifying lessons from other jurisdictions could also prove useful.

The ABS advised the Council that it would work with other government agencies on an individual basis, with respect to mesh block coding, but that whole of jurisdiction solutions were preferred, rather than agency based solutions.

POPULATION ESTIMATES

At the June 2007 meeting, the ABS provided the Council with an update on changes to the calculation of population estimates, in particular, the changes to the calculation of net overseas migration statistics. The ABS informed the Council of key issues in relation to the census count, birth registrations, Indigenous identification in death registrations, and overseas and interstate migration arising from the 2006 Census Post Enumeration Survey.

The Council supported the overseas and interstate migration initiatives and felt that great advances

had been made in Indigenous population estimates.

2011 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

At the November 2006 meeting, the ABS informed the Council of the success of the 2006 Census, with high levels of public cooperation and relatively few collection incidents. The census media coverage had been very positive during the days before and after the census. The ABS asked the Council to consider and comment on a paper on strategic options for expanding the content of the 2011 Census, and improving data quality, efficiency and timeliness.

The Council was particularly interested in the public reaction to the eCensus as it was the first time that online lodgement of census forms had occurred, and highlighted potential cost savings associated with higher use in the future. The ABS noted that an increase in the use of eCensus could potentially improve the timeliness of the first release of census data. The Council supported the decision made by the ABS to find ways to encourage households to complete an eCensus, and suggested identifying the characteristics of people who used the 2006 eCensus.

The ABS advised the Council that demand to expand census content and include additional topics remains high. The ABS indicated they were mindful of increased respondent load which may reduce cooperation from the public, and that public reaction to increasing the content for the 2011 Census would be carefully assessed.

The Council supported the decision by the ABS that raising awareness of the enumeration strategy for Indigenous communities would be a priority for the 2011 Census.

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Chapter 3 - The Year Ahead - 2007-08

[Contents >> Chapter 3 - The Year Ahead - 2007-08](#)

THE YEAR AHEAD - 2007-08

The Council acknowledged the financial constraints facing the ABS in the coming year, and the challenges that this presents to the Council in advising the Statistician and the Minister. The ABS Forward Work Program for 2007–08 to 2009–10 will provide the framework for the Council's deliberations during 2007–08.

Issues identified by the Council for consideration during the coming year include:

- the household survey program and, in particular, surveys that support population wellbeing
- the further development of the environment statistics program
- rural and regional statistics, and
- statistical leadership and further development of the national statistical system.

In 2007–08, the Council will continue to provide advice to the Statistician and the Minister in relation to the ABS' major statistical collections, but the above mentioned areas will be of particular focus. Discussions during the coming year will continue to offer ideas and solutions to the ABS in regard to balancing the ever increasing demand for statistical data, and the ABS' ability to meet these demands within its budget.

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Appendix 1 - Membership of Council and Attendance at Meetings

Contents >> Appendix 1 - Membership of Council and Attendance at Meetings

MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

| Membership of Council at 30 June 2007 and Date of Initial Appointment | | |
|---|--|----------------------|
| Member | Position | Date first appointed |
| Mr Geoff Allen | Director, The Allen Consulting Group | 1 March 2007 |
| Mr Brian Pink | Australian Statistician (ex officio) | 5 March 2007 |
| Prof. Tony Barnes | Senior Director Economic and Social Analysis Northern Territory Treasury | 1 October 2004 |
| Mr Roger Beale | Senior Associate The Allen Consulting Group | 15 May 2005 |
| Ms Glenys Beauchamp | Deputy Secretary Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs | 27 April 2006 |
| Ms Leith Bouilly | Director Bouilly Pastoral Co Pty Ltd | 15 May 2005 |
| Dr Peter Crossman | Assistant Under Treasurer and Queensland Government Statistician Office of Economic and Statistical Research Queensland Treasury | 11 March 1999 |
| Ms Pam Davoren | Deputy Chief Executive Policy Division ACT Chief Minister's Department | 18 November 2005 |
| Mr Clem Doherty | Chairman Like Minded Individuals Pty Ltd | 1 May 1997 |
| Ms Elaine Henry OAM | Chief Executive Officer The Smith Family | 15 May 2005 |
| Mr Peter Horn | Director Fiscal Strategy New South Wales Treasury | 1 May 2003 |
| Professor Graeme Hugo | Federation Fellow Professor of Geography & Director of the National Centre for Social Application of Geographic Information Systems The University of Adelaide | 15 May 2005 |
| Mr Vin Martin | Director Economic and Financial Policy Division Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance | 1 October 2004 |
| Dr James Moody | General Manager International Development CSIRO | 15 May 2005 |
| Mr David Parker | Executive Director, Macroeconomic Group Department of the Treasury | 15 May 2005 |
| Mr Greg Philp | Assistant Director Economic Policy Branch Department of Treasury and Finance Tasmania | 1 June 2005 |
| Mr Michael Potter | Director Economics and Taxation Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry | 15 May 2005 |
| Mr Leigh Purnell | Executive Director (International) Australian Industry Group | 15 May 2005 |
| Mr David Smith | Executive Director (Economic) Western Australia Department of Treasury and Finance | 28 January 2005 |
| Mr John Spasojevic | Secretary Commonwealth Grants Commission | 15 May 2005 |
| Professor Fiona Stanley AC | Director Telethon Institute for Child Health Research | 1 April 2003 |
| Ms Louise Sylvan | Deputy Chair Australian Competition and Consumer Commission | 1 March 2005 |

Changes in Membership since 30 June 2006

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 12 January 2007 | Mr Dennis Trewin retired |
| 28 February 2007 | Professor Sandra Harding retired |
| 1 March 2007 | Appointment of Mr Geoff Allen |
| 5 March 2007 | Appointment of Mr Brian Pink |
| 12 June 2007 | Dr Adam Graycar resigned |
| 12 June 2007 | Appointment of Mr Ben Wilson |

Meetings of Council 2006–07

Meetings of Council 2006–07

28 November 2006
5 June 2007

Attendance at Meetings

| | | Attendance |
|--|--------------------------|------------|
| Chairperson | Professor Sandra Harding | 1 |
| | Mr Geoff Allen | 1 |
| Australian Statistician | Mr Dennis Trewin | 1 |
| | Mr Brian Pink | 1 |
| State and Territory Representatives | | |
| South Australia | Dr Adam Graycar | 2 |
| Queensland | Dr Peter Crossman | 1 |
| | Mr Greg Pole | 1(a) |
| New South Wales | Mr Peter Horn | 1 |
| Northern Territory | Professor Tony Barnes | 2 |
| Victoria | Mr Vin Martin | 1 |
| | Ms Jane Brockington | 1(b) |
| Tasmania | Mr Greg Philp | 2 |
| Western Australia | Mr David Smith | 2 |
| Australian Capital Territory | Ms Pam Davoren | 1 |
| | Mr Philip Mitchell | 1(c) |
| Other Members | Mr Roger Beale | 1 |
| | Ms Glenys Beauchamp | 2 |
| | Ms Leith Bouilly | 1 |
| | Mr Clem Doherty | 2 |
| | Ms Elaine Henry | 2 |
| | Professor Graeme Hugo | 1 |
| | Dr James Moody | 2 |
| | Mr David Parker | 1 |
| | Mr Steven Kennedy | 1(d) |
| | Mr Michael Potter | 1 |
| | Mr Leigh Purnell | 1 |
| | Mr John Spasojevic | 1 |
| | Professor Fiona Stanley | 0 |
| | Ms Louise Sylvan | 2 |

(a) Attended as a proxy for Mr Peter Crossman at the June 2007 meeting.

(b) Attended as a proxy for Mr Vin Martin at the June 2007 meeting.

(c) Attended as a proxy for Ms Pam Davoren at the June 2007 meeting.

(d) Attended as a proxy for Mr David Parker at the June 2007 meeting.

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Appendix 2 - Agendas for ASAC Meetings

[Contents >> Appendix 2 - Agendas for ASAC Meetings](#)

AGENDAS FOR ASAC MEETINGS

28 November 2006 Meeting – Agenda

1. Summary record of previous meeting

Paper: Summary record of the 30 May 2006 meeting

2. Chairperson's Report

Verbal Report

3. Statistician's Report

Paper tabled at the meeting

4. 2011 Census of Population and Housing

Paper: Directions for the 2011 Census of Population and Housing

5 ABS Forward Work Program

Paper: ABS Forward Work Program

6 Agricultural statistics

Paper: Developments in agricultural statistics

7 Indigenous Australians – statistical directions and priorities

Paper: Indigenous Australians – statistical directions and priorities

8 Household survey review

Paper: Progress on the Household Survey Review

9. Update on the National Statistical Service

Paper: Recent NSS developments and an update on the iconic projects

5 June 2007 Meeting – Agenda

1. Summary record of previous meeting

Paper: Summary Record of 28 November 2006 meeting

2. Chairperson's report

Verbal Report

3. Statistician's Report

Paper tabled at the meeting

4. ABS Forward Work Program

Paper: ABS Forward Work Program

5. Operations of the Australian Statistical Advisory Council

Paper: Operations of the Australian Statistical Advisory Council

6. Household surveys

Paper: Household surveys – an update

7. Rural and regional statistics

Paper: Rural and regional statistics – the future

8. Enhancing small area data

Paper: Enhancing small area data in official statistics

9. Uses of taxation data

Paper: Uses of taxation data

10. Improving Australia's environment statistics

Paper: Improving Australia's environment statistics

11. Population estimates

Verbal report

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Appendix 3 - Australian Statistics Advisory Council - Annual Report

[Contents >> Appendix 3 - Australian Statistics Advisory Council - Annual Report](#)

INVOLVEMENT OF ASAC MEMBERS IN OTHER ABS ACTIVITIES/USER GROUPS

| ASAC Member | Committee / Group / Activity |
|------------------------|---|
| Dr Peter Crossman | State Statistical Forum Queensland State Statistical Consultative Committee Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group National Data Network Governing Board |
| Mr Peter Horn | State Statistical Forum New South Wales Statistical Coordination and User Forum Economic Statistics User Group |
| Prof. Tony Barnes | State Statistical Forum Northern Territory Statistical Liaison Committee Northern Territory Statistical Priorities Advisory Committee Population Estimates Technical Workshop General Social Survey Reference Group |
| Mr Vin Martin | State Statistical Forum Victorian Statistics Advisory Forum Economic Statistics User Group |
| Dr Adam Graycar | State Statistical Forum South Australian Statistical Policy Group South Australian Government Agencies Statistical Committee Statistics Program South Australia National Data Network Governing Board |
| Mr Greg Philp | State Statistical Forum Tasmanian Statistical Policy Committee Tasmania Statistical Advisory Committee |
| Ms Pam Davoren | State Statistical Forum |
| Prof. Graeme Hugo | Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group Australian Standard Geographical Classification Expert Committee |
| Mr Michael Potter | Economic Statistics User Group Labour Statistics Advisory Group |
| Prof. Fiona Stanley AC | National Data Network Governing Board |
| Mr David Smith | State Statistical Forum Western Australia Statistical Policy Committee |

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Appendix 4 - Operation of ASAC

[Contents >> Appendix 4 - Operation of ASAC](#)

OPERATION OF ASAC

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council was established by the **Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975**.

The Chairperson of the Council receives an annual fee, set by the Remuneration Tribunal, and members are reimbursed their travel costs, where applicable. Apart from the Chairperson, no members receive remuneration for serving on the Council. Direct expenditure on ASAC during 2006–07 was \$73,137. These costs are met from the ABS budget.

The higher costs incurred during 2006–07 mainly reflect the inclusion of publishing costs as an ASAC expense.

Secretariat services for ASAC are provided by the ABS. The office of ASAC Secretary is held by the Assistant Statistician, Office of the Statistician. Secretariat support provided by the ABS includes organising and recording meetings, administering membership and the members' web site, and the preparation of the Council's Annual Report. The cost of these services was estimated to be \$76,955 during 2006–07.

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Appendix 5 - Freedom of Information Statement

[Contents >> Appendix 5 - Freedom of Information Statement](#)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT

Below is a statement, as required by section 8 of the **Freedom of Information Act 1982**, about the structure of ASAC and how members of the public can obtain access to information held by it.

Establishment, organisation and functions

For information regarding the establishment, organisation and function of ASAC see Chapter 1.

Powers

As an advisory body, ASAC has no decision-making or other powers directly affecting members of the public. It does not administer any enactments or schemes.

Arrangements for outside participation

ASAC members are appointed by the Minister responsible for the ABS so that a broad range of views and interests are reflected in the advice that it offers to the Minister and the Australian Statistician. For membership details see Appendix 1.

Persons or bodies outside the Australian Government administration may participate in the Council's policy formulation by making representations to the Minister or the Chairperson on matters of concern to them.

Categories of documents

The ASAC Annual Report, which is tabled in Parliament, is available from all ABS offices. Files are maintained which contain documents relating to: the administration of the Council; papers discussed at Council meetings; summary records of proceedings of meetings; and correspondence relating to the activities of the Council.

Freedom of information procedures and initial contact points

All inquiries concerning access to documents, including inquiries under the **Freedom of Information Act 1982**, may be directed on weekdays, between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm, to the Secretary, Australian Statistics Advisory Council, c/- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Locked Bag 10, Belconnen, ACT 2616 – telephone (02) 6252 5533.

[Previous Page](#)

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